

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9012

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

FBIS AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

FBIS LONDON

FBIS NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

FBIS TEL AVIV

FBIS WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS BEIRUT 2300

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, SOPN, LE

SUBJ: AHDAB-FRANGIE MEDIA WAR

1. FRANGIE-AHDAB CONFRONTATION IS REFLECTED DAILY IN LEBANESE MEDIA, WITH BOTH SIDES ENJOYING ADEQUATE ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA.

2. TWO VERSIONS OF "RADIO LEBANON FROM BEIRUT" HAVE BEEN OPERATING SINCE MARCH 11: (A) PRO-AHDAB MEDIUM-WAVE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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FM SERVICES BROADCASTING FROM MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

STUDIOS AND OVER 10 KW AUXILIARY TRANSMISSION FACILITIES IN CENTRAL BEIRUT ON 836 AND 989 KCS MEDIUM WAVE AND 88.7, 96.2 AND 98.3 MCS FM AND (B) PRO-FRANGIE MEDIUM-AND SHORT-WAVE SERVICES BROADCASTING FROM STUDIOS AND RADIO LEBANON'S MAIN 100 KW TRANSMISSION FACILITIES AT AMSHIT, LOCATED IN PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN AREA ON COAST FEW KILOMETERS NORTH OF BYBLOS, ON 836 KCS MEDIUM WAVE AND 5980,9545, 9675, AND 11795 KCS SHORT WAVE. PRO-AHDAB STATION ON 989 KCS PREDOMINATES IN BEIRUT, WITH PRO-FRANGIE STATION ON 836 KCS AUDIBLE UNDER PRO-AHDAB STATION ON SAME FREQUENCY ONLY BY USE OF DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA. IN REST OF COUNTRY AND LEVANT, HOWEVER, PRO-FRANGIE COVERAGE IS UNDOUBTEDLY BETTER, GIVE MORE POWERFUL TRANSMITTERS AVAILABLE AT AMSHIT.

3. LEBANON'S TWO PRIVATE TV COMPANIES HAVE EACH BEEN PRESSED INTO SERVICE ON BASIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION: (A) AHDAB HAS FREE ACCESS TO FACILITIES OF COMPAGNEI LIBANAISE DE TELEVISION (CLT)--WHICH HAS FRENCH GOVERNMENT BACKING--LOCATED IN TALLAT AL-KHAYYAT AREA OF RAS BEIRUT. CLT TELECASTS PRO-AHDAB ARABIC-LANGUAGE NEWS NIGHTLY AT 2030 LT ON CHANNEL 4 (60 KW) FROM MOUNTAIN-TOP IN CHOUF REGION, ON CHANNEL 7 (4KW) FROM STUDIOS IN BEIRUT, AND (UNLESS KINK HAS BEEN BROKEN) FROM CHANNEL 2 (1KW) IN TRIPOLI. CLT ALSO TELECASTS MORE OR LESS IMPARTIAL FRENCH-LANGUAGE NEWS GEARED TO FOREIGN COMMUNITY NIGHTLY AT 2000 LT ON CHANNEL 9 (5 KW) FROM BEIRUT. (B) FRANGIE RETAINS CONTROL OF FACILITIES OF TELE-ORIENT--WHICH IS BACKED BY LORD THOMPSON OF FLEET--LOCATED IN BEIRUT SUBURB OF HAZMIYYE. THIS SUBURB HAS BEEN UNDER CONTROL OF CHAMOUN'S MILITIA SINCE BEGINNING OF LEBANESE CRISIS; GUARD AROUND TELE-ORIENT HAS BEEN BEEFED UP WITH PRO-FRANGIE ELEMENTS FROM ZGHORTA IN LAST FEW DAYS. TELE-ORIENT TELECASTS PRO-FRANGIE ARABIC-LANGUAGE NEWS NIGHTLY AT 2030 LT ON CHANNEL 5 (5 KW) FROM HAZMIYYE AND ON CHANNEL 11 (5 KW) FROM MOUNTAINTOP IN METN REGION. NEW RELAY TRANSMITTER ATOP JABAL AITO BETWEEN ZGHORTA AND EHDEN PROBABLY COVERS NORTH AS WELL. ALTHOUGH PRO-AHDAB CHANNELS ARE MORE CLEARLY RECEIVED IN

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MOST PARTS OF BEIRUT, TELEVISION WAR IS PROBABLY STAND-OFF IN REST OF LEBANON.

4. BEIRUT'S NUMEROUS DAILY NEWSPAPERS HAVE FULLY REPORTED STATEMENTS AND POSITIONS OF ALL VARIOUS CONTENDING PARTIES. EDITORIALY, ONLY PRO-FRANGIE "AL-BAYRAQ" HAS CONTINUED TO SUPPORT FRANGIE IN NAME OF "LEGALITY" IRRESPECTIVE OF CONSEQUENCES. ALL OTHER

PAPERS TAKING EDITORIAL POSITIONS--FROM LEADING IN-
DEPENDENT "AN-NAHAR" TO COMMUNIST PARTY ORGAN "AN-
NIDA"--SEE FRANGIE'S DEPARTURE AS LEAST OF ALL POSSIBLE
EVILS. THEIR GENERAL ATTITUDE IS THAT, IF HIS DEPARTURE
CAN BE DONE LEGALLY, SO MUCH THE BETTER; IF IT CANNOT;
HE SHOULD BE REMOVED ANYWAY.
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